

New York State
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Office of Fire Prevention and Control

Last Updated September 12, 2018

*(New and/or Updated FAQ's are Highlighted in Red;
Please Check the DHSES Website Frequently for Updates)*

FY 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

I. Due Date and Application Instructions

- 1) **Question: What is the application due date for the 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program?**

Answer: Applications are due to the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services- Grants Program Administration on September 14, 2018, by 5:00pm. Applications that are submitted past this date will be disqualified. No extensions will be given.

- 2) **Question: How do I submit my application for the 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program?**

Answer: Applications must be submitted via DHSES's E-Grants System. Applications that do not address all required sections of the RFA will be disqualified.

- 3) **Question: What are the consequences of not reviewing the E-Grants Tutorial?**

Answer: You are strongly encouraged to go through the E-Grants tutorial as it is designed to help you navigate the application process, especially if you are new to the grant process. Any questions concerning E-Grants can be directed to the grants e-mail address at: Grant.Info@dhses.ny.gov.

- 4) **Question: What will happen if I am late to register on E-Grants?**

Answer: If you do not register on time for E-Grants you risk missing your overall deadline for the application. You should register as soon as you know that you intend to submit an application to avoid any issues.

- 5) **Question: I am having trouble submitting my application in E-Grants and/or having problems downloading the appropriate documents that must be submitted as a required attachment with my application (e.g. file incompatibility). How can I receive assistance with this process?**

Answer: The E-Grants Users Tutorial for the FY 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program provides a step-by-step guide for successfully submitting your application via the E-Grants system. The tutorial is available at the following link:

<http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/recruit-retain-grant/>

If you have questions or concerns about E-Grants after reviewing the tutorial, please contact DHSES at Grant.Info@dhSES.ny.gov or 866-837-9133 for assistance.

6) Question: What will happen if I fail to answer all of the required sections of the application?

Answer: Applicants are required to answer all of the questions in this worksheet. Failure to answer all of the required questions will lead to a reduction in your score for the section being reviewed and could lead to an unfavorable overall score by the review panel.

7) Question: What are the consequences of requesting budget items that are not allowable?

Answer: If you request budgetary items that are not allowed under the 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program, those items will not be considered. Please refer to pages 6-7 of the 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program RFA for more details on permissible and non-permissible costs.

8) Question: What will happen if I submit for more funding than is allowable under the RFA?

Answer: Please ensure your budget does not exceed the funding cap. Requests for raising the funding cap will not be considered.

9) Question: When completing Section IV: County Fire Coordinator/Emergency Manager Verification of the Notice of Endorsement form, who should be completing this section?

Answer: Volunteer Fire Companies or Fire Departments must have a county-level endorsement by either the County Fire Coordinator (CFC), Emergency Manager (EM) or another county-wide officer that oversees the delivery of the services provided by the applicant. EMS agencies are not required to provide an endorsement signature. EMS verification will occur via the NYS DOH-BEMS Office.

10) Question: When applying on behalf of multiple agencies, does each agency need to complete the Notice of Endorsement?

Answer: Yes. The agency applying would be considered the “submitting” partner, meanwhile, each agency represented and benefiting from the proposed projects within the proposed application would be considered a “participating” partner, and would need to sign the Notice of Endorsement form.

II. Eligibility and Non-for-Profit Vendor Pre-Qualification Process

1) **Question: Who is eligible for the 2018-2019 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program?**

Answer: Only eligible organizations that are located within, and serve, the State of New York may apply. Funds will be awarded competitively based on the submission of applications by eligible volunteer fire departments, volunteer emergency service organizations and statewide organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters and/or volunteer emergency services personnel. Please reference Section III.A. of the RFA for specific eligibility guidance.

2) **Question: My agency represents volunteer EMS personnel and I am not associated with a fire district/organization. Am I still eligible?**

Answer: Yes, volunteer EMS agencies do not need to be attached/associated with a volunteer fire district/organization in order to be eligible to submit an application.

3) **Question: Who is required to meet the NYS Non-for-Profit Pre-Qualification requirements?**

Answer: Organizations incorporated under §1402 of the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law are no longer required to prequalify in order to be eligible to apply for grants offered by the State of New York, enter into a contract with the State, amend an existing State contract or make a purchase with State funds.

All Not-for-Profit Volunteer EMS agencies and Not-for Profit Organizations who represent the interests of volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency service personnel are required to go through the pre-qualification procedures. These organizations must submit an online Pre-Qualification Application through NYS Gateway. Please use the instructions in Section III.B and Exhibit C of the RFA for guidance to meet this requirement.

Applicant Type	Do I Need to Pre-Qualify?
Non-for-Profit incorporated under §1402 of the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law	NO
Non-for-Profit not incorporated under §1402 of the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law	YES
Eligible Municipalities (must be comprised of 50% or more of volunteers)	NO

4) **Question: How long does the Pre-Qualification process take?**

Answer: Organizations that submit all the appropriate documentation should expect to have their information reviewed and approved within a few days. ***It is important that you select the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) as your agency for filing, for prompt notification of your pre-qualification documentation.*** For

the purposes of this grant opportunity, we strongly encourage you to complete and submit your pre-qualification documentation vault at least a week prior to the RFA application deadline in order to ensure time for your information to be reviewed. ***Applications received from not-for-profit applicants that have not Registered and are not Pre-Qualified in the Grants Gateway on the application due date listed on the cover of this RFA cannot be evaluated. Such applications will be disqualified from further consideration.***

Note: You will be notified via email on whether you have been pre-qualified (approved).

5) Question: Do I need to submit my application in the NYS's Grants Gateway system?

Answer: At this point, this grant opportunity is only being advertised within NYS Grants Gateway system and should not be submitted through this system. All applications must be submitted via DHSES's E-Grants System.

6) Question: Where can I find more information on the NYS's Grants Gateway and Vendor Pre-Qualification initiatives?

Answer: Please use the following link for more information on these Initiatives:
<http://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/>.

7) Question: Could you please provide a more specific definition of "statewide not-for-profit organization"? Does this definition require a not-for-profit to serve the entire state, OR is a not-for-profit serving a designated county or region eligible to apply?

Answer: Only statewide organizations, i.e., those representing volunteer firefighter or volunteer emergency services personnel interests of the entire state, are eligible to apply for this grant funding. Local and/or regional organizations are ineligible.

8) Question: Our membership is 10 Volunteer firefighters and 24+ career staff. Are our eligibility for Volunteer companies being below 50% Volunteer manning strength, but now being a combination of volunteers and career eligible to apply for the Recruitment and Retention Grant?

Answer: With the information you provided, your organization would not be eligible to apply for the FY 2018 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program due to its overall volunteer membership being below the required 50% of total personnel. Please refer to *Section II. A. Eligibility* of the RFA (page 3) for more details.

9) Question: Where can I find the Notice of Endorsement document?

Answer: The Notice of Endorsement document can be found within the Request for Applications (RFA) as Exhibit B (page 21.)

III. Regional Partnerships

1) Question: Is a regional partnership required to submit an application?

Answer: No. While applicants are encouraged to pursue regional partnerships, a goal articulated in the RFA and highlighted in Section IV “Regional Partnership Development and Support” it is not a requirement for submitting an application.

2) Question: What qualifies as a region?

Answer: For the purposes of this grant program, “regional” is defined as two or more eligible entities or a county submitting on behalf of all entities within the county. One of the participating regional partners is required to serve as the “submitting partner” while all other partners will be considered “participating partners.” **Note:** Eligible entities that are participating as a region do not have to be contiguous.

3) Question: If I am part of a regional application, may my organization apply separately with an individual application?

Answer: For the purposes of this grant program, an eligible organization may submit only one *individual application* and participate as a **Participating** partner (not a Submitting partner) in one additional *regional application*.

4) Question: If our County were to partner with another County and do a Regional Partnership, would the grant request still have to remain for no more than \$25,000 or at that time could we request up to \$50,000?

Answer: Please refer to *Section IV. Regional Partnership Development and Support* in the RFA (page 5): “For the purpose of this grant program, an eligible organization may *submit* only one application, but may also be included as a *participating partner* (not a submitting partner) in an additional *regional* application.” Please note that the application cap is \$25,000 for single-entity applications as well as regional partnership applications.

IV. Permissible Costs

1) Question: Can I purchase fitness memberships under this grant program?

Answer: While a fitness membership in and of itself is not a permissible cost, a program that would be developed between the fitness center and department that included specific and measurable objectives for the improvement to firefighter health and wellness would be considered under this grant opportunity.

2) Questions: Can I purchase distance learning equipment under this grant program?

Answer: Distance learning equipment will be considered an eligible cost through this grant opportunity provided that your application articulates specific targets for member retention through this project.

3) Question: Can I purchase property under this grant program?

Answer: The purchase of property is not an eligible expense under this grant opportunity.

4) Question: Can I use grant money to create a recruit mentoring program, and pay selected members a small stipend for their additional duties as a mentor?

Answer: Stipends to employees or members are considered cash payments and would therefore be unallowable within this grant program. Please refer to *Section V. Authorized Program Expenditures; B. Costs Not Permissible* of the RFA (page 7) for more details.

5) Question: Would the following projects be allowable under this grant program: Advertisement Trailer that can be placed in any location focused at recruitment of new members; Permanent Digital Sign for public display; Professional Services such as photography and graphic design for a marketing campaign; Leadership Training not directly offered by DHSES-OFPC; development of a website focused at collecting memberships and applicants; Fitness Equipment such as a treadmill; and costs associated with running a Fire Camp for young explorers/junior firefighters?

Answer: With the descriptions you provided, all of the projects (advertisement trailer, permanent signs, professional services, leadership training, website development, fitness equipment and fire camp expenses) would be allowable expenses under this grant program. Please note that the purchase of an “advertisement trailer” must be used exclusively for advertisement as described in your question in support of the objectives of the grant, and should not be used for other/operational activities. Please refer to *Section V. Authorized Program Expenditures* of the RFA (pages 6-7) for more details.

V. Other

1) Question: I have additional questions that were not addressed in this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) bulletin. Who should I contact?

Answer: Questions should be directed in writing to the following email address: Grant.Info@dhses.ny.gov. This FAQs bulletin will be updated regularly based on questions that are submitted by prospective applicants. Please check the DHSES website (<http://www.dhses.ny.gov/ofpc/recruit-retain-grant/index.cfm>) frequently for updates.